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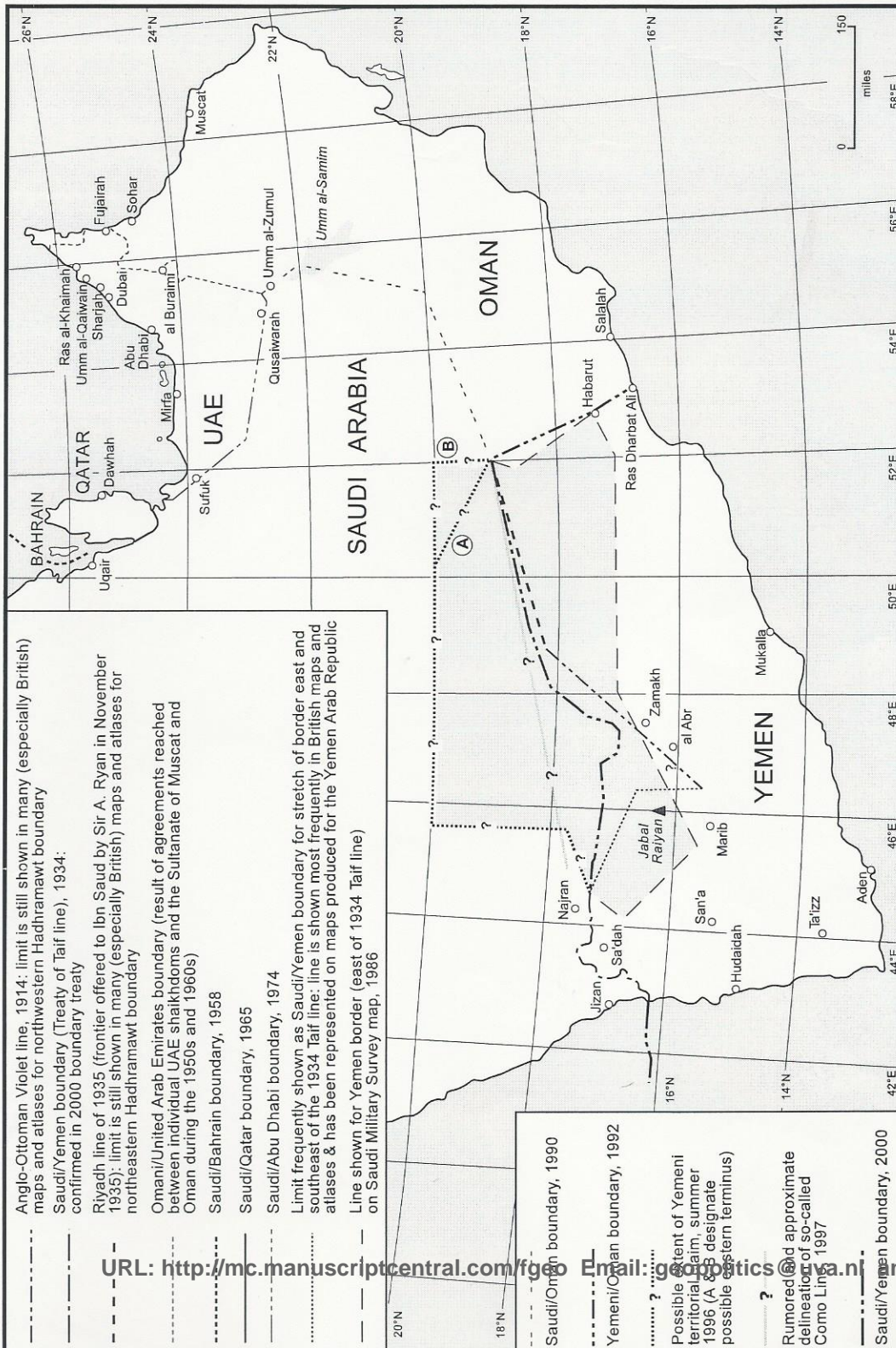
**International Boundaries and Borderlands in the Middle East: Balancing Context, Exceptionalism and Representation**

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Figure 1: A hole in the wall – Israel’s security wall near Bethlehem, September 2005 (source: Richard Schofield)







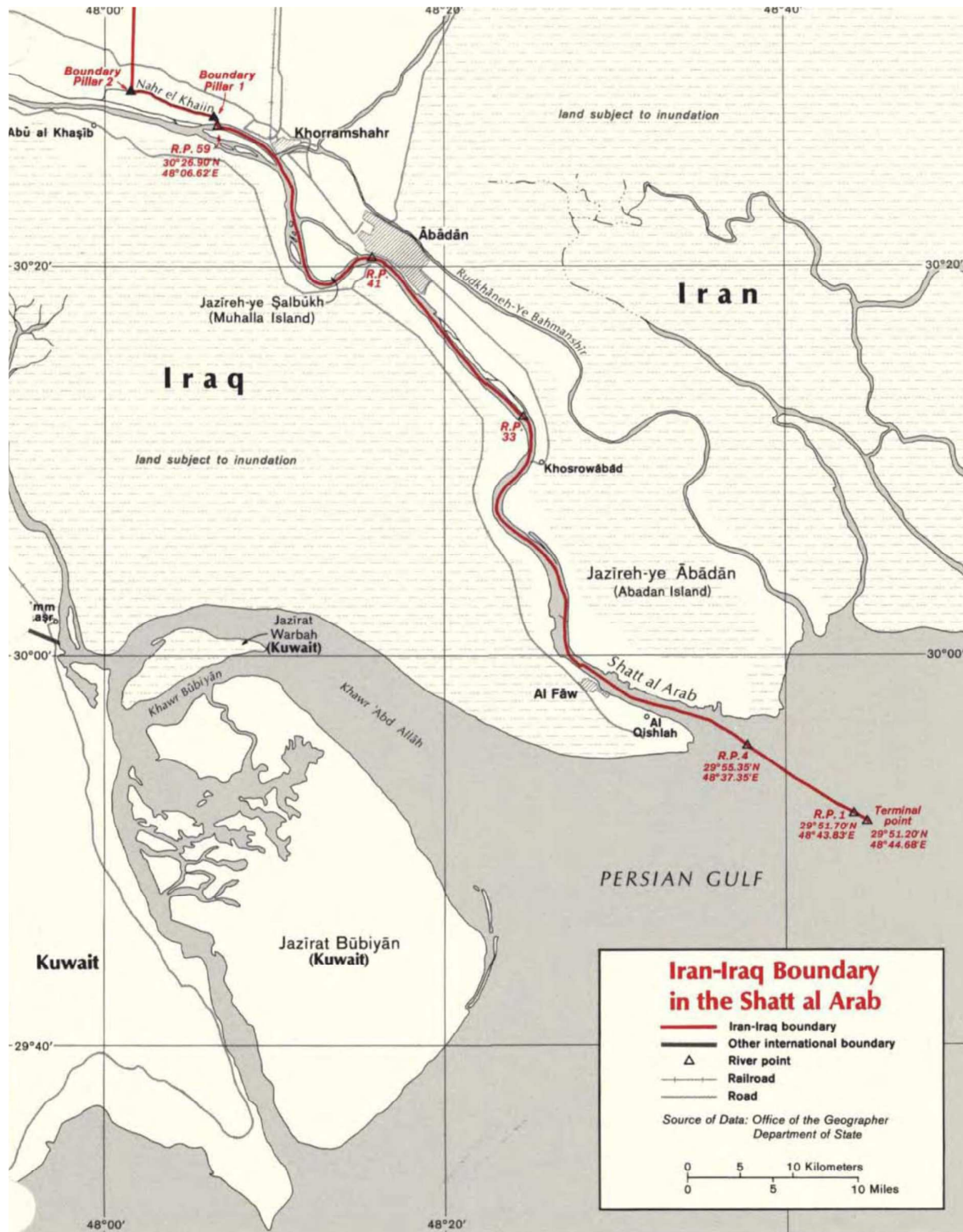
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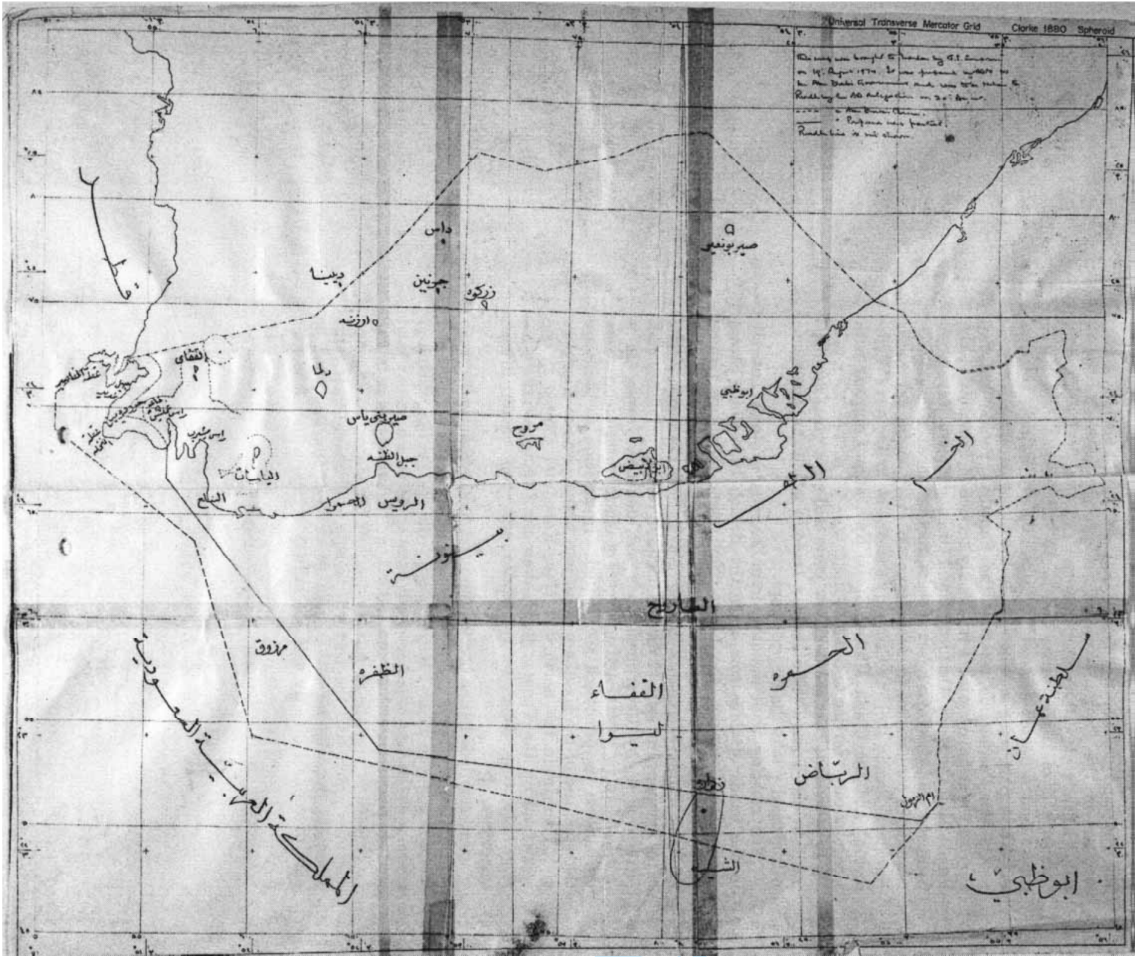


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Captions and annotations

## International Boundaries and Borderlands in the Middle East: Balancing Context, Exceptionalism and Representation

Figure 1: A hole in the wall – Israel's security wall near Bethlehem, September 2005 (source: Richard Schofield) – mentioned on p: 8 of draft m/s

Figure 2: The Saudi-Yemeni borderlands and the agreement of June 2000 (source: Richard Schofield) – mentioned on p: 18 of draft m/s

Figure 3a: Laying down the Perso-Ottoman boundary in stone: Hubbard's 'confidence' (source: reproduced with kind permission from G.E. Hubbard, *From the Gulf to Ararat: Imperial Boundary Making in the Late Ottoman Empire* (London: I.B. Tauris 2016) – mentioned on p: 18 of draft m/s

Figure 3b: Laying down the Perso-Ottoman boundary in stone: Hubbard's 'doubt' (reproduced with kind permission from G.E. Hubbard, *From the Gulf to Ararat: Imperial Boundary Making in the Late Ottoman Empire* (London: I.B. Tauris 2016) – mentioned on p: 18 of draft m/s

Figure 3c: Laying down the Perso-Ottoman boundary in stone: Hubbard's 'confusion' (reproduced with kind permission from G.E. Hubbard, *From the Gulf to Ararat: Imperial Boundary Making in the Late Ottoman Empire* (London: I.B. Tauris 2016) – mentioned on p: 18 of draft m/s

Figure 4: The Iran-Iraq boundary after the June 1975 river boundary protocol (source: reproduced with kind permission from U.S. Department of State International Boundary Study 164: *Iran-Iraq Boundary*) – mentioned on p: 20 of draft m/s

Figure 5: Sketch map anticipating the bizarre 1974 Saudi-Abu Dhabi (UAE) boundary agreement (source: reproduced with kind permission from R. Schofield (ed.) *Arabian Boundaries, 1966-1975* (Cambridge: Cambridge Archive Editions [Cambridge University Press], 2009), 15, p. 234 – mentioned on p: 23 of draft m/s

**International Boundaries and Borderlands in the Middle East: Balancing Context, Exceptionalism and Representation**

**Abstract**

*Renewed academic interest in the Middle Eastern border is inevitable with the marked increase in fortified territorial limits across the region and the appearance of new borderland spatialities in the sovereign margins of the war-torn Iraqi, Syrian and Yemeni states. If the consequent spectacle of displaced populations confronting state power at the international boundary seems a defining image, this article concentrates on two other dominant, less publicised but still relevant border representations from the recent past: territorial definition and its deterministic association with conflict in the northern Gulf and the resource-driven finalisation of the peninsula’s territorial framework. This follows consideration of the significance of the borderland in the region. The author reflects back here on a long record of research into these issues and argues that all of these contexts must be acknowledged in any balanced appraisal of the Middle Eastern border. The article comments on the challenge of extending regional approaches to the study of borders and – on the centenary of the infamous 1916 Sykes-Picot treaty - acknowledges that the Middle East region’s experience of international boundaries continues to be depicted as exceptional. Unsurprisingly, it will conclude that there is no one typical Middle Eastern border.*

## APPRAISING MIDDLE EASTERN BORDERS AND BORDERLANDS

State borders and borderlands in the Middle East have recently been preoccupying the international community, featuring prominently in popular Western media depictions and attracting increasing levels of scrutiny from academia. At least visually, the current confrontation between vulnerable, displaced populations and state power at fortified state limits (De Genova's 'border spectacle'<sup>1</sup>) might well appear to define the international boundary in popular terms – an encounter experienced by migrants and refugees both in the region and further afield.

Broadening our spatial focus to borderlands, the crucial backcloth in the staging of such dramas has, of course, been the successive collapse in the sovereign reach of the Iraqi and Syrian states over the last one and a half decades and the appearance of autonomous political actors in (and across) their margins. Often referred to as stateless spaces in their better known (and earlier established) African context, a developing concentration on what Goodhand (2008) has termed the 'places in between' within regional conflict systems explains security studies increasing concerns with Middle Eastern borderlands.<sup>2</sup> Such profound change in border status and borderland security has also coincided with the centenary of the infamous Anglo-French arrangements struck during the First World War to foreshadow the new framework of mandated state territories that would come into being to replace the Ottoman Middle East at the turn of the 1920s.<sup>3</sup> This has occasioned many to ponder whether the Sykes-Picot 'territorial system' has had its day and whether things might not have been done differently in the first instance.<sup>4</sup> Certainly the possibility that the borders of the Middle East have changed or are changing is out there.



This all seemingly provides fertile grounds for a reenergised academic engagement with Middle Eastern territorial questions, reflected in no small way by the appearance of this special issue of *Geopolitics* but also, already, by other special issues of journals that hadn't displayed a huge interest in such themes in recent decades.<sup>5</sup> Extending a more critical approach to the study of borders and territoriality chimes with claims that since the Arab Spring and its tumultuous aftermath "Middle Eastern studies has been undergoing a quiet revolution [with] a heightened level of reflection on theoretical models, concepts and methodologies".<sup>6</sup> In this brave new world, authoritarianism and protest movements have been debated more freely, while updated critiques of nationalism have allowed human mobilities and transnationalism to be interrogated from fresh angles. Importantly, too, Middle Eastern studies seems to be breaking out of what some have perceived to be a regional straightjacket in the fields of political economy and history, as research is increasingly framed internationally and globally.<sup>7</sup> Can the same be done for coverage of territorial questions?

With its declaredly critical focus on socio-spatial process and its commitment to ethics and social justice, geography's vogue border studies approach seeks to identify the production of borders at various levels and scales – from the individual body to inter-state level.<sup>8</sup> Given such proclivities, it will naturally be drawn to how intensifying fence and wall construction along borders within the region imposes concentrated restraints on human mobility – and on the itinerant processes of walling, bordering and othering. Here, it won't be short of case-study material with more such constructions having gone up in the Middle East than any other region in recent times.<sup>9</sup>

But, in the words of seasoned international boundary observer Michel Foucher during June 2017, “aren’t borders about more than just fences and migration?”<sup>10</sup> To which this author would reply yes, pointedly so for the region under review here. The spectacle of vulnerable human groups meeting state authority at international boundary fences, like the pertaining notion that the inherited colonial framework has reached its sell-by date, is a dominant contemporary image but is just that. The same goes for those seemingly widening and insecure borderland spaces. These are only the latest of many valid and varied Middle Eastern border representations and contexts of recent times and many others (despite being typically identified with earlier points of time) remain relevant to varying degrees across the region. Here we are talking about: an association between disputed territorial definition and conflict (northern Gulf); the resource driven finalisation of the political map on land and sea (Arabia and the waters of the Gulf and Eastern Mediterranean) and; the adoption of territorial disputes as symbols of inter-state and sub-regional rivalry (island sovereignty disputes).

Just as these contexts are still with us, the appearance of border fences is not particularly new and the inadequacies of the colonial territorial framework have long been apparent. The main argument of this article, therefore, is that we shouldn’t be falling into the trap of thinking there is a typical Middle Eastern boundary or borderland, however tempting it may be for the application of vogue methodological and theoretical academic approaches. As within any other region, there is considerable variety in the type, scale and intensity of territorial challenges that are being confronted. All of these contexts and processes need to be understood as complex and dynamic and as existing alongside one another– even if some (like

continuing questions over state sovereignty, delimitation and demarcation) appear rather old-hat and mundane. The author reflects back here on researching Middle Eastern borders and borderlands extensively over the last three decades, with a concentration on his main areas of expertise - Iraq, Iran, Arabia and the Persian Gulf.

In tackling the issues and arguments just noted, this article adopts the following structure. Firstly, we summarise how ideas have moved in geography and the social sciences to cover boundaries and borderlands and the challenge of applying these at the regional level. Secondly, we selectively review claims made over the years and decades by scholars that suggest the Middle Eastern (or, indeed, the Arabian) border should be regarded as exceptional, simultaneously charting the Anglophone geographical tradition of covering the international boundary in the region. Having commented upon the exaggerated attention that has been placed upon the 1916 Sykes-Picot treaty on its centenary, we then turn our attention to borderlands in the third section of this article.

While not many borderlands can be deemed to have existed in a traditional sense, there is a need to better appreciate how the margins of the state have functioned at their various levels of operation - materially and historically. Our case-study here is the region's classic historical borderland, the Perso-Ottoman frontier zone. In a fourth and final main section, successive representations of international boundaries are explored in an Arabian context from the 1980s forwards – here we respectively treat territorial definition and its deterministic association with conflict in the northern Gulf, the resource-driven finalisation of the Arabian territorial framework and then putting up border fences. Such a progression from

destabilising international boundary disputes, through finalising their status and alignment to marking them down on the ground may seem quite linear and logical for such a youthful political region, where many states only got their independence from Britain as recently as 1971. Yet the point here and a central message of the article as a whole is that these representations can't simply be signed off to specific time periods. Though they vary in intensity, they continue to be valid and present across the region and need to be fully acknowledged in any balanced appraisal of the Middle Eastern border.

#### THE CHALLENGE OF EXTENDING STUDIES TO A REGIONAL CONTEXT

Whichever region is being considered, there will always be a notable concentration on those individual territorial limits or disputes that are in the news – particularly within the context of conflict, as they temporarily become of interest to a wider constituency than geography or regional studies. The tendency towards individual coverage is reinforced by a long-observed 'unique case' syndrome within academic study that needs to be confronted when attempting to place borders and borderlands into comparative context. Political geographers have always commented that there is much to be gained from examining the evolution of individual international boundaries in the surrounding human and physical contexts of their borderlands, by writing their biography as such<sup>11</sup> – here, seemingly taking their cue, at least in part, from Stephen Jones' famous old caution: 'each boundary is almost unique and therefore many generalisations are of doubtful validity'.<sup>12</sup>

Such is the diversity of border-related concerns and territorial issues across the Middle East, that they are usually subjected to suitably multidisciplinary



(generally historical, geographical and legal) treatments within edited multi-author collections.<sup>13</sup> There are almost certainly more single-author overviews of sub-regional territorial concerns out there than for the Middle East and North Africa as a whole – one thinks here of our main focus here - the Arabian Peninsula/Persian Gulf region - where so much has been written about international boundaries and territorial disputes in the last few decades that a recent historiographic survey devotes a whole section to ‘boundaries and legal matters’.<sup>14</sup> On the face of it, the Arabian Peninsula has much that ties it together in territorial terms - regional geopolitics that were characterised historically by a resource-poor, arid environment and sparse but mobile population levels, then its subjection to Britain’s desert-boundary drawing as its protégé statelets were given a size and shape in the developing context of its huge hydrocarbons endowment.<sup>15</sup> Research into Arabian boundary-making has, of course, been facilitated greatly by the easily accessible British governmental primary record at Kew (The National Archives) and St.Pancras (India Office Records at the British Library).<sup>16</sup>

This special issue of *Geopolitics* seeks, on the face of it, to begin extending the critical concerns of geography’s vogue prism of border studies to the regional application of the Middle East. As has been established, the collapse of the sovereign reach of the state, the resultant human suffering and displacement, combined with increased securitisation and fortification of inter-state limits provides much to mull over. Border studies has been much lauded for its perceptive critiques of the bounding and bordering process (including, most recently, Amilhat-Szary’s notion of *borderity*)<sup>17</sup> and its theorisation of the spatial workings and manifestations of power.<sup>18</sup> It has prided itself in developing explicitly non-state-centric approaches – addressing the long-harboured criticism that geography traditionally

concerned itself only with the international scale in covering boundaries and territory.<sup>19</sup>

Exploring how distinct spaces are produced and reproduced by the enforcement, observation and negotiation of borders at various levels (and also how the reverse obtains in revealing how space management produces new operative borders) has been a significant concern.<sup>20</sup> In this vein, recent research of emergent borders of identity and allegiance in a conflictual urban context has continued the rich tradition of studying the spatial and societal divisions of the major cities of the Eastern Mediterranean.<sup>21</sup> Moving slightly further south, it should not surprise that the most written about Middle Eastern territorial dispute has been singled out for critical treatment. There have been various studies of the various spatial impacts and the large-scale and localised meanings of Israel's security wall (see *Figure 1*)<sup>22</sup>, while the continued expansion of Israeli settlements on Palestinian territory is reflected in a deepening geographical engagement with settler colonial studies.<sup>23</sup>

If these efforts square with contemporary geography's re-energised missive to "gauge how borders are confronted, experienced and negotiated",<sup>24</sup> then border studies sometimes seems to have moved too far away from geography's traditional scalar concern with international boundaries.<sup>25</sup> After all, the reality by which the world is fundamentally compartmentalised into sovereign state territorial units is not going to change any time soon.<sup>26</sup> This position has been acknowledged with some prominent recent efforts to rehabilitate the legitimacy of the international boundary within geography – Megoran's imaginative call for more border biographies comes to mind here, as does Reece Jones resourceful inventory of state practices

at the contemporary securitised border.<sup>27</sup> Others have called for an overall rebalancing of contemporary border studies, when recognising it as a commendably energised if slightly unwieldy field of study.<sup>28</sup>

This rebalancing of geography's current territorial concerns might usefully extend to a generally ignored maritime dimension but also, in this author's opinion, to reengaging more substantively with international boundary disputes. Disputes over territorial definition and an international boundary's provenance, alignment and status remain a huge area of preoccupation in the Middle East and North Africa. Kelly has observed that deterministic concerns such as relative state positioning remain a live issue in inter-state disputes and domestic political discourses<sup>29</sup>. Given that this is observable in the region, we might also pause to consider what contemporary geopolitics and border studies have recently had to offer in critiquing boundary and territorial disputes. In many ways, this comes across as restating the obvious.

In demonstrating that the analysis of any regional crisis must begin by acknowledging the essential messiness of the local, Toal has offered a blueprint for what the critical geopolitics of any territorial dispute might look like. This covers its legal and historical aspects, characterises its variegated dynamics at the regional and international levels but also reveals the workings of power through identifying vested interests and agency.<sup>30</sup> In related vein, Brunet-Jailly has recently tried to breathe life into the old boundary dispute classification originally developed by veteran boundary geographer Victor Prescott in the mid-1960s which distinguishes between territorial, positional, functional and resource dimensions as their primary drivers.<sup>31</sup> This may all seem rather basic but surely goes to underline that

contemporary border studies has gone a little too far in eschewing traditional (and what it sees as outmoded) geographical territorial concerns. It is in the same spirit of rebalancing our coverage that this author has called for more explicitly multidisciplinary approaches that “link the contemporary legal and technical status of disputes more closely with their historical and political drivers... within the context of their own complex geographies.”<sup>32</sup>

#### THE EXCEPTIONAL MIDDLE EASTERN BORDER?

As with other trappings and trimmings of the Middle Eastern state system, the theme of regional exceptionalism has always been around when discussing international boundaries. Within regional and political studies more broadly, academics have been long been arguing for the development of comparative and theoretical frameworks that relegate a distinct treatment for the Middle East that is essentially orientalist in its tone and origins.<sup>33</sup> In geography, the related notion that a unique Middle Eastern city could ever have existed has been pretty much dismissed for the best part of four decades now.<sup>34</sup> Where boundaries and territory are concerned, regional exceptionalism has been made principally for two reasons. Firstly, Islamic notions of sovereignty were communal rather than territorial, supposedly rendering the European state model with its fixed borders unsuitable for (and alien to) traditional modes of social and spatial organisation<sup>35</sup>. Secondly, nomadism was prevalent in many of the more arid areas of the Middle East - here tribal territories expanded and contracted with the availability of resources as, if you like, an early form of mobile borders was witnessed. Traditional Arabian geopolitics, for instance, dictated that mobility was the key to survival – the scarcer resources were,



the further people had to travel to gather them, reflected in the size of respective *dirah* (tribal grazing grounds).<sup>36</sup>

Much political use has been made out of the first observation. Erasing the colonial boundaries that truncate the region from Morocco to Muscat so as to integrate the region’s community of believers within a putative singular state has been an important tenet of Arab nationalism.<sup>37</sup> Similarly, some of the Arab world’s most charismatic political personalities have engaged colourfully with the language of regional exceptionalism in highlighting the alien provenance of fixed territorial borders – though some, as we’ll witness, haven’t always been very consistent here. For instance, in commenting that Iraq’s borders stop at Kuwait City and Kuwait’s at Baghdad during a relatively passive phase in their long running boundary dispute during the early 1980s, Iraqi President Saddam Hussein was borrowing from an analogy made by Ibn Saud in the early 1920s.<sup>38</sup>

With respect to the second observation here, there may have been a tendency to simplify, even caricature nomadic mobilities. Britain’s former Political Resident in the Persian Gulf, Sir Rupert Hay would liken the Arabian desert to an area of high seas, over which nomads and their camels roamed at will.<sup>39</sup> As Braudel would comment, such reductionist views only held up when you were looking in from the outside – whereas, from the inside, desert societies would soon reveal their “complicated organisations, hierarchies, customs and astonishing legal structures”.<sup>40</sup> Portraying Hay’s views as typical of Britain’s traditional geographical coverage with its explicit colonial connections would, however, be slightly disingenuous. Sure enough, the sizeable literature on traditional territorial organisation and boundary-drawing that was originally contributed by travellers, explorers,

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2  
3 diplomats and those serving on imperial commissions helped perpetuate  
4 many of the arguments for seeing the Middle East as broadly exceptional.  
5 These views often found their expression through the Royal Geographical  
6 Society and its publications. While certain commentaries could come across  
7 as slightly orientalist in tone when portraying the inhospitability,  
8 remoteness and sickliness of far-flung borderland localities,<sup>41</sup> there can be  
9 little doubting the great value of such a legacy in establishing the bases of  
10 colonial territorialities. For instance, the ruminations of famous travellers  
11 like Thesiger and independently-minded diplomats such as Ingrams would  
12 inform Britain's understanding of the social and spatial organisation of  
13 southern Arabia.<sup>42</sup> Not before time, greater recognition is also being lent to  
14 the reflections of this most traditional group of commentators on the  
15 boundary-making process – sometimes they were far more considered, dare  
16 one say critical, than is often assumed. Just take a look at Hubbard's  
17 imaginative captioning ("confidence, doubt and confusion") of a sequence  
18 of photographs grappling with the challenge of reconciling a Perso-Ottoman  
19 boundary delimitation to features on the ground on the eve of the First  
20 World War (see Figure 2a-c).<sup>43</sup>

21  
22 To generalise somewhat, the perception that international boundaries in the  
23 region were exceptional would fade with decolonisation as the same broad  
24 problems of adjusting to the colonial territorial framework was faced by the  
25 postcolonial state across the globe. There seemed much in Drysdale and  
26 Blake's observation that "[t]he political spheres they [international  
27 boundaries] define have acquired a seeming permanence, and the state  
28 constitutes as basic, legitimate and universal a unit of political geographic  
29 organisation in the Middle East and North Africa as elsewhere".<sup>44</sup> It was  
30 noteworthy that this clear, anti-exceptionalist statement was emanating  
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(certainly where Blake was concerned) from the influential Middle East regional geography school established at Durham in the post-WW2 years. It remains the case that there is no equivalent region or continent-wide commitment in the Middle East to retaining the territorial limits inherited from the colonial period that is in place for Latin America and Africa with the institutionalised acceptance of the legal principle of *uti possidetis juris*. Yet, even one of the most radical proponents of territorial revisionism in the Arab World – Libya’s Gaddafi – ultimately proved a pragmatic statist. Having called during the 1970s and 1980s for the establishment of state mergers on a variety of anti-colonial premises, the Libyan state would allow for its maritime boundaries with Tunisia and Malta to be adjudicated at the International Court of Justice in The Hague. It would do the same with its land boundary with Chad early in the next decade – pushing once again for a maximal territorial state definition.<sup>45</sup>

Yet, there is always a danger of generalising across the Middle East – highlighted by another British Geographer, John Wilkinson, at the turn of the 1990s. He would postulate that “[n]ot one of the states of the Arabian Peninsula recognised by the international community... could put up a watertight case to the International Court at the Hague to retain the territory it actually occupies”<sup>46</sup>. Wilkinson was representative, if you like, of a third but smaller geographic tradition - regional Arabists who had spent much of their careers in the region and whose research had a more obvious ethnographic bent. Making the case for sub-regional exceptionalism, he pointed to the tendency for even recently-signed Arabian boundary treaty texts to remain largely secret and the failure of state signatories to process such agreements in the manner the international legal community has come to expect. Wilkinson’s comment coincided with Iraq’s invasion (and

attempted annexation) of Kuwait and the significant regional insecurities it fostered. By the end of the 1990s, the Arabian states had done much to redress this position – entrenching territorial definition in the pragmatic context of accelerated resource development<sup>47</sup>. As for the resolution of the Kuwait crisis, the argument would be made quite openly that it was exceptional circumstances that were demanding exceptional measures, so the UN Secretary-General himself made arrangements for the finalisation of this international boundary on the ground, whose inviolability was guaranteed by the Security Council.<sup>48</sup>

Let's now fast-forward to the current (post-2011 Arab Spring) context of perceived territorial change in the region, of newly-emergent state and non-state spatialities that has sharply refocused attention on the Middle Eastern border and its relationship with human mobility. To a degree, the impression is being given that the international community is ultimately prepared to sanction more change to the existing territorial framework here than it is elsewhere – most obviously when compared to the West's unflinching stance over Ukrainian territorial integrity following the Russian annexation of Crimea early in 2014. The case for making a change to the territorial framework of the eastern Mediterranean has been reinforced by uncritical representations of the 1916 Sykes-Picot correspondence on its centenary.

Thankfully, even from popular sources, there has been a discernible backlash against such representations with *Time* magazine carrying the following headline in May 2016 - "Sykes-Picot: the centenary of a deal that did not shape the Middle East"<sup>49</sup>. It should never be forgotten that Britain, from the start, was aware of the potential problems it was creating with the

various and often contradictory components of its wartime territorial deals – the ‘Sykes-Picot system’, if you like. Take, for instance, the comments of its Foreign Secretary Arthur James Balfour on the eve of his retirement during August 1919: “in short... the Powers have made no statement of fact which is not admittedly wrong, and no declaration of policy which, at least in the letter, they have not always intended to violate”.<sup>50</sup> Here he was reflecting on Britain’s slim prospects of reconciling the 1915-16 Husain-McMahon correspondence, promising an independent Hashimite Arabian kingdom in return for coming in against the Ottomans during WW1, the Sykes-Picot exchange of letters and the November 1917 declaration of sympathy with Zionist aspirations for an independent homeland in Palestine that would be named after him<sup>51</sup>.

Yet the Sykes –Picot treaty itself had a demonstrably limited effect – designating broad spheres of influence whose limits rarely coincided with the international boundaries that would emerge, often from further Anglo-French deliberations, over the next decade. While the Bolshevik revolution of 1917 would render the notion of a French-controlled buffer wedge of territory to separate imperial Russia and Britain redundant, it should be underlined that the basic shape and size of the state that would include Mosul within Iraq had been recommended by the influential De Bunsen Committee as early as the summer of 1915 for reasons of imperial strategy (protecting Mesopotamia from the north) and political economy (capturing its oil resources)<sup>52</sup>. In fact, Sykes-Picot had little effect on the precise territorial definition of the Iraqi state – something that this author has rather argued was “... the product of a series of discrete regional episodes in which Britain was centrally involved, before and after an independent Mesopotamian state had ever been imagined”<sup>53</sup>.



The largely arbitrary nature of the Sykes-Picot carve-up has long been highlighted too. The detail of boundaries ultimately laid down generally took account of indicators where available – a mixture of locally-observed separations and old Ottoman administrative divisions. While no one could seriously proclaim the territorial framework that emerged in the early 1920s as a model outcome, it is not clear that there was necessarily a better basis out there for dividing the Ottoman Eastern Mediterranean into the states that emerged from it.<sup>54</sup> There had been calls from plenty of influential people following the conclusion of Sykes-Picot that the political map be redrawn or at least finessed where possible to prioritise emergent regional realities over the old, imperial strategic mind-set. In the same statement before the House that has already been referred to, Balfour had challenged Britain and France during August 1919 “... to make such international arrangements, economic and territorial, as will enable each region to develop itself to the best advantage without giving occasion for jealousies or disputes”.<sup>55</sup> US President Woodrow Wilson had urged a more ‘scientific basis’ for future regional settlement at the Versailles Peace Conference., though the interesting ideas the commission he despatched to the Eastern Mediterranean came up were effectively still-born once Britain and France withdrew support.<sup>56</sup>

So London and Paris would arrive at their own arrangements for defining the margins of their new proteges and none of these were more vague than the delimitation originally laid down to separate the mandates of Iraq and Syria – the line so famously discarded by ISIS in recent times when territorialising its trans-boundary borderland state. For a December 1920 Anglo-French Convention supposedly laid down a boundary between Iraq and Syria running for hundreds of miles in less than six lines of treaty text.

When asked about the most suitable location for this territorial limit two years earlier, Iraq’s imperial architects-in-chief, Gertrude Bell and Arnold Wilson quipped that, while you might patrol existing caravan routes to mark some sort of divide, no government would ordinarily be interested in extending effective control over uncultivated and unpopulated desert areas<sup>57</sup>. Maybe this international boundary was more artificial than most therefore and that might explain why Sykes-Picot has come in for the treatment it has.

BORDERLANDS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

The point that boundaries as lines are a statist and legal abstract and that borderlands are the reality on the ground with width was made by Friedrich Ratzel as early as the mid-1890s. This basic premise was developed more fully by two more British geographers, Minghi and House, from the 1960s, as they tried to foster a borderland studies approach that looked at transactions and flows across international boundaries in routine everyday settings.<sup>58</sup> At the turn of the 1990s, the American historian Martinez then forwarded a four-stage evolutionary typology for borderlands, whereby their effective, operative width would increase as relations between neighbouring states improved in a context of cooperation – a schema that seemed more plausible in a pre-globalisation context.<sup>59</sup> Some of the more recent geographic literature has concentrated on emergent complexity with the identification of *borderscapes* constituted by the layered human identities and power structures found within international borderlands.

Importantly, however, borderlands have taken on a wider meaning beyond the usual disciplinary parameters and the assumption that their effective

width increases in a cooperative context of increasing inter-state cooperation has now been questioned. While *conflict borderlands* might now be understood by many as the physical and societal spaces that straddle the international boundaries of states experiencing armed conflict (including civil war, insurgency and other forms of inter and intra state violence), the main thing to take away here is that their scope and extension is generally seen to increase and widen in a conflictual context. ISIS's recent rise in the Iraqi-Syrian borderlands needs to be viewed in such a light and, indeed, represents something of an oddity in spatial and territorial terms.<sup>60</sup>

Recent representation of Sykes-Picot suggests that maybe we don't know quite as much as we should about the history of boundaries and borderlands in the Middle East. This tallies nicely with recent observations from historians that we have been too fixed on representation and insufficiently preoccupied with borderland materialities – that is there is more to say about their social and spatial structures and how power has been projected and resisted in state margins.<sup>61</sup> Since the Perso-Ottoman frontier zone (comprising Iran's contemporary western borderlands with Turkey and Iran) constitutes the most obvious material example of a historical borderland in the Middle East we'll say a few words about it here. We will refer in a later section to the 'paper borderlands' created by the overlapping territorial claims of Saudi Arabia and Yemen in southern Arabia before 2000. For they could be viewed as having broadly defined a borderlands legally – if largely on paper only (see Figure 3).

The Perso-Ottoman borderlands constituted a classic frontier zone going back to the sixteenth century. Temporality is key here. Taking a broad

sweep, the loose territorial parameters of this indeterminate zone moved east then west as surrounding central authority was never extended on a permanent or convincing basis, while its remoteness and unfamiliarity provided for localised political autonomy and a relative freedom of socio-economic movement.<sup>62</sup> This did not mean, however, that for significant periods of time – often decades within the centuries under discussion, fortified limits did not exist as hard borders within these borderlands.<sup>63</sup> Nonetheless, historically, there was something in that old deterministic role claimed for major mountain ranges, with Hubbard’s assessment that the Zagros would: “sooner or later... invariably resume its original role as a divider of nations”.<sup>64</sup>

Of course, that didn’t stop Britain and Russia from trying to narrow this frontier into a mappable line from the early 1840s. Such misplaced, grandiose ambition ultimately resulted in a distinctly mid-nineteenth century project (in approach and conception) not being discharged until the onset of the First World War, late in 1914. In reckoning that it could establish a basis for observing the basis of a boundary with its observation of a *status quo* line in 1843, never mind to suggest that this should be observed on a permanent basis looking forward by ‘freezing such a moment in time’<sup>65</sup>, Britain was reducing the complex and dynamic local organisation of the borderlands. So the most obviously prioritised nineteenth century European effort to instil territorial order in the Middle East soon became relegated to mapping an indeterminate zone.<sup>66</sup> Meanwhile, the exercise was used by the Ottomans to extend authority to the borderlands for the first time and by Persia to get the best deal they could secure through European involvement at a time when they were unlikely to achieve as much through bilateral means.<sup>67</sup> As for the effect on the borderland populations themselves, “one

consequence... was to progressively instil a more developed territorial consciousness or defensiveness..., whereby territorial definition itself would become an important component of identity and rivalry”.<sup>68</sup>

## RECENT REPRESENTATIONS OF ARABIAN BOUNDARY DYNAMICS

### *Territorial instability and conflict in the northern Gulf*

While few observers would point to Iraq’s long-running boundary disputes with Iran and Kuwait in the northern Gulf as causes of Saddam Hussein’s decisions to invade Iran in September 1980 and Kuwait a decade later during August 1990, they were significant contributory factors. As its principal territorial architect, Britain had long believed that the constellation of state territory in the northern Gulf posed a genuine prospect of conflict<sup>69</sup>. Iran and Iraq, with the Persians and Ottomans before them, had never managed to develop workable arrangements for the Shatt al-Arab ever since that river was first nominated as an international boundary in 1847. Meanwhile, a vague and ambiguous Iraq-Kuwait boundary delimitation remained essentially unchanged in legal terms from its Anglo-Ottoman origins of 1913 right through to the Iraqi invasion. Extended academic treatments of the evolution of these border questions – and their background role in conflict – appeared throughout the 1980s and 1990s, including by this author, based on the relevant British primary records<sup>70</sup>.

While the case has been made for linkage in the manner by which Iraq’s disputes in the northern Gulf operate, the treaty history of each is quite distinct. A momentous package of Iran-Iraq agreements of 1975 introduced a *thalweg* delimitation for the Shatt al-Arab running along the mid-point of the main navigable channel (see Figure 4). Together, they arguably



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2  
3 comprised the most sophisticated legal regime ever agreed for a river  
4 boundary, containing every conceivable safeguard against future dispute  
5 over alignment and status<sup>71</sup>. Yet, within just over half a decade the  
6 signatories were at war, highlighting that a problematic boundary solved in  
7 law had not been a regional problem removed. The UN Secretary-General's  
8 resolution of the Iraq-Kuwait boundary dispute– supposedly just the  
9 demarcation of an existing delimitation but, in reality, quite a bit more than  
10 that – took the best part of three years following Iraq's invasion of, then  
11 removal from Kuwait<sup>72</sup>.

12  
13 Right up until 1975 at least, a classic spatial imaginary could be deemed to  
14 exist whereby several British politicians and diplomats (including former  
15 Foreign Secretary Lord Halifax) believed that Iraq's limited access to Gulf  
16 waters constituted a strategic time-bomb. From the 1930s, its ministers and  
17 diplomats had been largely persuaded that a triangular operation of  
18 disputes between Iraq and its neighbours posed a serious threat to regional  
19 stability and, increasingly from 1970, the threat of physical conflict. Its rules  
20 held that whenever Iran maintained the upper hand in the conduct of the  
21 Shatt dispute (or materially improved its position there), Iraq would look  
22 south to Kuwait to compensate<sup>73</sup>. After acceding to Iran's long-standing  
23 positional demand that the navigation channel of the Shatt al-Arab river be  
24 shared in 1975, some argued that Iraq might turn its gaze fully on Kuwait to  
25 address its 'access problem'. Intriguingly, Britain's Ambassador in Baghdad  
26 "wonder[ed]... whether an Iraqi takeover of Kuwait ... would or should  
27 lead to war". And he went further: "Indeed in terms of Western interests...  
28 is the continued independence of Kuwait really a matter of such great  
29 moment?"<sup>74</sup> The degree to which these possibilities were being

contemplated genuinely surprised. We all know what happened 15 years later.

And this old imaginary hasn't been fully extinguished! The adoption of the Shatt dispute as a symbol of inter-state (and indeed, Arab-Persian) rivalry has been notable since the Iraqi revolution of July 1958<sup>75</sup>. The precise location of the navigation channel along the Shatt in its southern reaches remains a bone of contention today between Iran and Iraq and is continuing to delay a final peace settlement of the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq War. The Iraq-Kuwait border question still features periodically in contemporary Iraqi, even Basrawi politics, as the UN Secretary-General's treatment of two decades back is bemoaned and denigrated by law-makers, politicians and clerics. For example, during the summer months of 2011, Iraqi Shi'ite leader Muqtada al Sadr led sizeable protests in Basra against Kuwait's proposed development of a new super-port on the eastern shores on Bubiyan Island<sup>76</sup>. Some of the old colonial spatial imaginaries have been adopted in contemporary political discourse, far from unusual in postcolonial politics and a reminder that, however much we wish it could be, determinism cannot be wished away.

#### *Finalising the Arabian territorial framework*

The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait provided a severe jolt to what is still a very youthful state system along the western Gulf littoral. It is as well to underline that here we have the world's greatest concentration of microstates and hydrocarbons, all within the geographical context of the semi-enclosed sea that is the Persian Gulf. There were still sizeable gaps in the Arabian territorial framework moving into the 1990s<sup>77</sup> and addressing these would soon become the pragmatic focus of Arabian states. A mixture

of security concerns and material incentives would drive the substantial progress made in the 1990s towards finalising and regulating the Arabian political map. To accommodate accelerated levels of oil exploration in the flat market conditions in the early 1990s, the states of the region generally sought to better define their state margins. International boundaries were delimited by new treaty settlements (and one inter-GCC dispute [Bahrain/Qatar] even went to the Hague for judicial settlement), the details of old ones were released and important positions of principle, policy and intent were arrived at institutionally by the GCC that worked for the maintenance, entrenchment and (where appropriate) completion of the Arabian territorial framework<sup>78</sup>. The results were that most Arabian states were a lot more confident of their basic territorial definition than they had been at the beginning of the decade.

It was against such a dynamic that the Saudi-Yemeni boundary agreement of June 2000 was concluded, albeit somewhat surprisingly at the time. This had been and remains a loaded question as, rather incongruously, a high tech and elaborate border fence separates the Rub al Khali in Saudi Arabia from a war-torn, disintegrated Yemeni state in the south. But, of all its territorial limits, Saudi Arabia has always been most concerned with its southern borders<sup>79</sup>. Meanwhile, the traditional mismatch between a cultural affinity to Yemeni nationhood and a much more restricted allegiance to various Yemeni states and governments – north, south or unified, has historically bedevilled efforts by Sana’a to negotiate territorial limits with its northern neighbour<sup>80</sup>. The agreement of 2000 introduced a boundary line but in far less detailed terms than one might have expected<sup>81</sup>. This had everything to do with a political window of opportunity suddenly opening up for the conclusion of a settlement before the technical teams

responsible for its conclusion had really thrashed out its exact parameters. It became a question of joining the dots thereafter to lay down a line on the ground that would later be marked by marble and gold by Saudi Arabia to constitute the current border fence<sup>82</sup>.

The territorial framework remains to evolve most obviously out in Gulf waters but also in some important land sections. The political map seems most confused where Arabian land borders meet the south-western waters of the Gulf in the vicinity of the Saudi sovereign land corridor that separates Qatar to the north and Abu Dhabi (UAE) to the east<sup>83</sup>. The bizarre 1974 treaty that supposedly defines and regulates the Saudi-UAE boundary specifies: that all of the rights to a transboundary oilfield (30% of which lies in the UAE (Zarrara) and 70% of which lies in Saudi Arabia (Shaiba) belong to Saudi Arabia; that the kingdom is allowed to erect installations as it wishes on islands that don't even belong to it and, finally; introduces a delimitation that doesn't square with the coordinates specified in the agreement (see *Figure 5*). We also are left with a befuddling maritime political geography. In fact, as it stands, the Qatar-Saudi land delimitation continues offshore to constitute the Qatar-Abu Dhabi offshore delimitation<sup>84</sup>. In time-honoured fashion, the border is now symbolising a growing inter-state rivalry between Abu Dhabi and Riyadh and the two sides were even involved in a minor naval skirmish off Khor al Udaid in March 2010.

### *Fencing Arabia*

The increasing number of border fences running through the Arabian Peninsula – as with everywhere else – is usually justified by security narratives, serving as a powerful and tangible message that the state is protecting its public from outside threats. Equally, it might be viewed as an

acknowledgement that many Arabian states, still less than a half-century old, have only just territorialised or are still doing so. Marking the boundaries of a state's newly-evolved and agreed territorial definition is a well-established modernist aspiration, after all. This harks back to de Vattel's famous admonition of 1758: "[t]o remove every subject of discord, every occasion for quarrel, one should mark with clarity and precision the limits of territories".

Arabian border fencing and walling has several aspects to it. Fortification of the Iraq-Kuwait boundary post- UN ruling was explicitly justified as exceptional but Saudi Arabia's border defence systems to the north and south now supposedly guard against the chaos of collapsed state authority spreading into the kingdom from Iraq and Yemen. Meanwhile those erected by the UAE during the noughties with Oman and by the latter with Yemen also had a lot to do with marking new state territorialisation. The structures placed along the 2000 Saudi-Yemen delimitation soon made themselves felt on local, established patterns of human circulation at both ends of the borderlands and this was long before Yemen's current malaise. Tribes of the Yemeni *mashriq* used to benefit from social services in the south-western Saudi city of Najran, for instance, while some members of the traditionally mobile Mahra tribal confederation in the Yemeni north-east also used to boast of holding Omani, Saudi and UAE passports.<sup>85</sup> The walls and fences dividing the cities of Buraimi/Al Ain and Habarut (Oman/Yemen) owe much, as commented, to territorialisation in its classic, modernistic state-building sense – but also to a more localised one of protecting and projecting economic interests.<sup>86</sup>



## CONCLUDING REMARKS

Unsurprisingly, there can be no one typical Middle Eastern boundary or borderland, even if some haunting images of human suffering appear to characterise them in a contemporary context of the collapsed reach of the sovereign state in Iraq, Syria, Libya and Yemen and a growing region-wide propensity for central authority to wall or fence inter-state limits. Reflecting back on researching Middle Eastern territorial questions, a case could be made for arguing that it is perceived regional (including human) security contexts that affect how we view borders at various spatial levels and represent them. While certain representations are more readily associated with particular regions in specific temporal contexts – territorial definition as a factor in conflict (the northern Gulf, 1980-1990) and (in)security and the drive for resources fuelling territorialisation (Arabia in the 1990s) – they haven't disappeared. Though its significance is currently subsumed by more pressing territorial concerns, Iraq's access question has been politicised at both the state and local level. Meanwhile, the Arabian political map remains to be finalised on land and offshore in Gulf waters. Concomitantly, governments continue to utilise territorial and boundary questions as political symbols of regional and inter-state rivalries. If the Lower Gulf islands dispute has displaced the Shatt al-Arab's traditional role in the former regard, Saudi Arabia and the UAE have adopted their rather bizarrely defined boundary in the latter capacity.

The emergence of new power spatialities in the marginal areas of the fragmented states of Iraq and Syria has, to an extent, highlighted the fact that we don't always know a great deal about the historical materialities of borderlands. There is clear scope for increased research into the way these

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3 areas operate – contemporaneously and historically – and recent strides  
4 made in the elucidation, for instance, of the concepts of *borderscapes* and  
5 *border biographies* offer room for encouragement here. Despite the current  
6 questioning of the Sykes-Picot system of colonially-defined territories, it  
7 would be something of a surprise if the territorial framework was  
8 significantly redrawn – at least formally.

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16 Nevertheless new states have recently emerged. The 2008-9 Abyei case at  
17 the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague began the difficult process  
18 of drawing boundaries for South Sudan. Interestingly, the tribunal decided  
19 that there was insufficient evidence to confirm a former, vaguely-worded  
20 and uncertainly located provincial boundary as a new international one. It  
21 looked instead at other human indicators such as oral history and burial  
22 mounds in reaching its decision on where this should run<sup>87</sup>. Though there  
23 will be huge challenges area in introducing an operative and viable  
24 borderlands on the ground, this move of international law is broadly  
25 encouraging, reminding us that there always existed the possibility of  
26 defining international boundaries in the Middle East that were more identity  
27 and allegiance based. When estimating the boundaries of Kuwait in 1908,  
28 the Government of India’s resident Gulf historian J.G. Lorimer, commented  
29 that these were “... fluctuating and... are, at any given time, the limits of the  
30 tribes which then, either voluntarily or under compulsion, owe allegiance to  
31 the Shaikh of Kuwait”.<sup>88</sup> This was ultimately not the route chosen for  
32 drawing the Arabian territorial framework but greater recognition of human  
33 movement, needs and vulnerabilities will hopefully be more prominent in  
34 the future fine-tuning and management of Middle Eastern borders.

## NOTES

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<sup>2</sup> J. Goodhand, 'War, peace and the places in between: why borderlands are central' in M. Pugh, N. Cooper and M. Turner (eds.) *Whose Peace? Critical Perspectives on the Political Economy of Peacebuilding* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan 2008).

<sup>3</sup> Predictably, there have been a good number of recent books issued that look back to the Middle East during the First World War in this very context, including, for instance: J. Barr, *A Line in the Sand: Britain, France and the Struggle that Shaped the Middle East* (London: Simon and Schuster 2011); K. Ulrichsen, *The First World War and the Middle East* (London: Hurst 2014); E. Rogan, *The Fall of the Ottomans: The Great War in the Middle East, 1914-1920* (New York: Basic Books 2015).

<sup>4</sup> Such concerns were addressed fully and imaginatively in the lavish 2-part *al Jazeera World* documentary, 'Sykes-Picot: Lines in the Sand', that was broadcast extensively during May-June 2016: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A\\_eEB27fj8s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A_eEB27fj8s).

<sup>5</sup> For example, *International Affairs* has just devoted a special issue to 'Contentious Borders: the Middle East and North Africa post-2011': 93, 4 (July 2017). This includes a concluding paper by W. Zartman entitled: "State, borders and sovereignty in the Middle East: unsteady but unchanging", pp. 938-948.

<sup>6</sup> BRISMES call for papers, July 2017 for BRISMES 2018 annual conference on *New approaches to studying the Middle East*, King's College London.

<sup>7</sup> BRISMES call for papers (note 6).

<sup>8</sup> Wilson and Hastings (eds.) (note 1).

<sup>9</sup> R. Hassner and J. Wittenberg, 'Barriers to entry: who builds fortified boundaries and why?', *International Security*, 40/1 (2015), pp. 157-190.

<sup>10</sup> Comments in a panel session entitled 'Whatever Happened to our Borderless World?/The Future of Borders in 2017', *London International Boundary Conference*, 5 June 2017, King's College London.

<sup>11</sup> J.R.V. Prescott, 'Borders in a "borderless" world', *Geopolitics* 4/2 (1999) pp. 262-273; N. Megoran, 'Rethinking the study of international boundaries: a biography of the Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan boundary', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 102/2 (2012) pp. 464-481.

<sup>12</sup> S. Jones, *Boundary-making: a Handbook for Statesmen, Treaty-editors and Boundary Commissioners* (New York: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace 1945).

<sup>13</sup> For example: G. Blake and R. Schofield (eds.), *Boundaries and State Territory in the Middle East and North Africa* (Wisbech: Menas Press 1987); C. Schofield and R. Schofield (eds.) *The Middle East and North Africa: World Boundaries Volume Two* (London: Routledge 1994); I. Brandell (ed.), *State Frontiers: Borders and Boundaries in the Middle East* (London: I.B. Tauris 2006).

<sup>14</sup> J. Peterson, 'The Arabian Peninsula in Modern Times: a Historiographical Survey of Recent Publications', *Journal of Arabian Studies*, 4/2 (2014), pp. 244-274.

<sup>15</sup> J. Kelly, *Eastern Arabian Frontiers* (London: Faber and Faber 1964); J. Wilkinson, *Arabia's Frontiers: the Story of Britain's Boundary-Drawing in the Desert* (London: I.B. Tauris 1991);

R. Schofield, 'Borders and Territoriality in the Gulf and Arabian Peninsula during the Twentieth Century', in R. Schofield (ed.) *Territorial Foundations of the Gulf States* (London: UCL Press 1994 – reissued by Routledge in 2016), pp. 1-77; G. Okruhlik and P. Conge, 'The Politics of Border Disputes: On the Arabian Peninsula, *International Journal*, 54/2 (1999), pp. 230-248; J. Peterson, 'Sovereignty and Boundaries in the Gulf States', in M. Kamrava (ed.) *International Politics in the Persian Gulf* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press 2011), pp. 21-49.

<sup>16</sup> Many relevant holdings have been published by Cambridge Archive Editions: For example, see R. Schofield and G. Blake (eds.) *Arabian Boundaries: Primary Documents, 1853-1957* (Farnham Common: Archive Editions 1988); R. Schofield (with E. Evans) (ed.) *Arabian Boundaries, New Documents, 1966-1975* [18 volumes] (Cambridge: Cambridge Archive Editions [CUP] 2009).

<sup>17</sup> A-L. Amilhat-Szary and F. Giraut (eds.) *Borderities and the Politics of Contemporary Mobile Borders* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan 2015).

<sup>18</sup> R. Schofield, 'Back to the Barrier Function: where next for international and boundary disputes in political geography?', *Geography*, 100/3 (2015), pp. 133-143.

<sup>19</sup> Wilson and Hastings (eds.) (note 1).

<sup>20</sup> N. Parker and N. Vaughan-Williams, 'Critical border studies: broadening and deepening the 'lines in the sand' agenda', *Geopolitics*, 17/4 (2012), pp. 727-733.

<sup>21</sup> M. Davie, 'Demarcation lines in contemporary Beirut' in Schofield and Schofield (eds.) (note 4), pp. 35-58; C. Larkin, *Memory and Conflict in Lebanon: Remembering and Forgetting the Past* (London: Routledge 2012); M. Dumper, *Jerusalem Unbound: Geography, History and the Future of the Holy City* (New York: Columbia University Press 2014).

<sup>22</sup> For example: G. Bowman, 'Israel's Wall and the Logic of Encystations: Sovereign Exception or Wild Sovereignty', *Focaal*, 50 (November 2007), pp. 127-135. See also the many publications of David Newman, including: D. Newman and A. Paasi, 'Fences and neighbours in the post-modern world: boundary narratives in political geography', *Progress in Human Geography*, 22/2 (1998), pp. 186-207.

<sup>23</sup> See the work of Oren Yiftachel, for instance: including *Ethnocracy: Land and Identity Politics in Israel/Palestine* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press 2006)

<sup>24</sup> Schofield (note 18), p.136.

<sup>25</sup> Schofield (note 18).

<sup>26</sup> L. O'Dowd, 'From a 'Borderless World' to a 'World of Borders': bringing history back in', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 28/6 (2010), pp. 1031-1050.

<sup>27</sup> Megoan (note 11); R. Jones, 'Spaces of refusal: rethinking sovereign power and resistance at the border', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 102/3, pp. 685-699.

<sup>28</sup> J. Sidaway, 'Review Essay: the Return and Eclipse of Border Studies: Charting Agendas', *Geopolitics*, 16/4 (2011), pp.969-976

<sup>29</sup> P. Kelly, 'A Critique of Critical Geopolitics', *Geopolitics*, 11/1 (2006), pp. 24-53.

<sup>30</sup> G. O'Tuathail (G. Toal), 'Russia's Kosovo: a Critical Geopolitics of the August 2008 War over South Ossetia', *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, 49/6 (2008), pp.670-705.

<sup>31</sup> J (Victor). Prescott and G. Triggs, *International Frontiers and Boundaries: Law, Politics and Geography* (Leiden: Martinus Nijhoff 2008); E. Brunet-Jailly (ed.) *Border Disputes: a Global Encyclopaedia* [in 3 volumes] (Santa Monica: ABC/Clio 2015).

<sup>32</sup> Schofield (note 18), p.137.

<sup>33</sup> N.H. Ayubi, *Over-stating the Arab State: Politics and Society in the Middle East* (London: I.B. Tauris 1995).

<sup>34</sup> G. Blake and R. Lawless (eds.) *The Changing Middle Eastern City* (Beckenham: Croom Helm 1980); M. Bonine, 'The morphogenesis of Iranian cities', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 69, 2 (1979), pp. 208-224.

<sup>35</sup> G. Joffe, 'Concepts of sovereignty in the Gulf region', in R. Schofield (ed.) (note 15), pp. 78-93; R. Schofield, 'Boundaries, Territorial Disputes and the GCC States', in D. Long and C. Koch (eds.) *Gulf Security in the Twenty-First Century* (Abu Dhabi: Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research 1997), pp. 133-168.

<sup>36</sup> Wilkinson (note 15); Kelly (note 15).

<sup>37</sup> M. Hudson (ed.), *The Middle East Dilemma: the Politics and Economics of Arab Integration* (New York: Columbia University Press 1999).

<sup>38</sup> Schofield (note 35), p. 135.

<sup>39</sup> R. Hay, 'The Persian Gulf States and their Boundary Problems', *Middle East Journal*, 93 (1956), pp: 433-445.

<sup>40</sup> F. Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II* (London: Fontana 1981 [4<sup>th</sup> impression of original 1966 work]), p: 176.

<sup>41</sup> See R. Schofield, 'Narrowing the Frontier: Mid Nineteenth-Century Efforts to Delimit and Map the Perso-Ottoman Boundary' in R. Farmanfarmaian (ed.) *War and Peace in Qajar Persia* (London: Routledge 2008).

<sup>42</sup> W.H. Ingrams, 'Hadhramaut: A Journey to the Sei'ar Country and through the Wadi Maseila', *Geographical Journal*, 17 (1936), pp. 524-551; W. Thesiger, 'Desert borderlands of Oman', *Geographical Journal*, 31 (1950), pp. 137-171.

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<sup>44</sup> A. Drysdale and G. Blake, *The Middle East and North Africa: A Political Geography* (New York: Oxford University Press 1985), p. 149.

<sup>45</sup> R. Schofield, 'Border disputes in the Gulf: Past, Present and Future', in G. Sick and L. Potter (eds.) *The Persian Gulf at the Millennium* (New York: St. Martin's Press 1997), pp. 127-165.

<sup>46</sup> Wilkinson (note 14), p. iv.

<sup>47</sup> R. Schofield, 'Down to the Usual Suspects: Border and Territorial Disputes in the Arabian Peninsula and the Persian Gulf at the Millennium', in J. Kechichian (ed.), *Iran, Iraq and the Arab Gulf States* (New York: Palgrave 2001), pp. 220-223.



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<sup>49</sup> <http://time.com/4327377/sykes-picot-the-centenary-of-a-deal-that-did-not-shape-the-middle-east/>, 13 May 2016.

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<sup>51</sup> J. Hurewitz (ed.), *Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East: A Documentary Record* (New York: Van Nostrand 1956), 2, pp. 10-22.

<sup>52</sup> ‘Report of the Committee on Asiatic Turkey’, 30 June 2015, in R. Schofield (ed.) *Arabian Boundary Disputes* (Farnham Common: Archive Editions 1992), 8, pp. 3-48.

<sup>53</sup> R. Schofield, ‘Borders, Regions and Time: Defining the Iraqi Territorial State’, in R. Visser and G. Stansfield (eds.) *An Iraq of its Regions* (London: Hurst 2007), pp. 167-204.

<sup>54</sup> Dror Zeevi: ‘Was it all arbitrary? Drawing the Borders of the Middle East after WW1’, *Borders at the Interface: Bordering Europe, Africa and the Middle East*, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Beer Sheva, 7-11 December 2014.

<sup>55</sup> Memorandum by Mr. Balfour respecting Syria, Palestine and Mesopotamia dated August 11, 1919’ in Schofield (ed.) (note 52), 8, pp. 460-464.

<sup>56</sup> ‘Recommendations of the King-Crane Commission on Syria and Palestine’, 28 August 1919 in Hurewitz (ed.) (note 47), 2, pp. 66-74.

<sup>57</sup> Schofield (ed.) (note 52), 8, p. 355.

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<sup>60</sup> Schofield (note 18), p.136.

<sup>61</sup> P. Readman, C. Radding and C. Bryant (eds.), *Borderlands in World History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan 2014); R. Schofield, C. Schofield and C. Grundy-Warr, *Contested Border Geographies: Boundaries, Maps and Geopolitics* (London: I.B.Tauris [forthcoming]).

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<sup>63</sup> R. Matthee, ‘The Safavid-Ottoman frontier; *Iraq-i Arab* as seen by the Safavids’, *International Journal of Turkish Studies*, 9 (2003), p: 165.

<sup>64</sup> Hubbard (note 43), p. 3.

<sup>65</sup> Schofield (note 62).

<sup>66</sup> R. Schofield, ‘Laying it Down in Stone: Delimiting and Demarcating Iraq’s Boundaries by Mixed International Commission’, *Journal of Historical Geography*, 24, pp. 397-421.

<sup>67</sup> F. Kashani-Sabet, *Frontier Fictions: Shaping the Iranian Nation, 1804-1906* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1999); S. Ates, *The Ottoman-Iranian Borderlands: Making a Boundary, 1843-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2014); R. Schofield (ed.) *The Iran-Iraq Border, 1840-1958* (Farnham Common: Archive Editions 1989).

<sup>68</sup> Schofield (note 62), p. 149.

<sup>69</sup> R. Schofield, 'International Boundaries in the Northern Gulf: taking us back to 1975', *Orients Strategiques*, Numero 4 (Les Frontieres dans le Monde Arabe: Quel enjeux de pouvoirs aux marges des Etats) (2016), pp. 61-75.

<sup>70</sup> For Iran-Iraq boundary and territorial disputes see: R. Schofield, *Evolution of the Shatt al Arab Boundary Dispute* (Wisbech: Menas Press 1986) and K. Kaikobad, *The Shatt al-Arab Boundary Question: A Legal Reappraisal* (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1988). For Iraq-Kuwait, see Schofield (note 44); D. Finnie, *Shifting Lines in the Sand: Kuwait's Elusive Frontier with Iraq* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 1992); H. Rahman, *The Making of the Gulf War: Origins of Kuwait's Long-standing Territorial Dispute with Iraq* (Reading: Ithaca Press 1997).

<sup>71</sup> R. Schofield, 'Introduction to 1975' in R. Schofield (ed.) (note 16), 16, pp. v-xii.

<sup>72</sup> Schofield (note 44); M. Pinther, 'Demarcation of the Iraq-Kuwait Boundary' in H. Srebro (ed.) *International Boundary Making* (Copenhagen: International Federation of Surveyors 2013), pp. 94-117.

<sup>73</sup> Schofield (note 69).

<sup>74</sup> Despatch dated 25 March 1975 from J. Graham, Baghdad to the FCO in Schofield (ed.) (note 16), 16, p. xii.

<sup>75</sup> R. Schofield, 'Position, Function and Symbol: the Shatt al Arab dispute in perspective', in L. Potter and G. Sick (eds.) *Iran, Iraq and the Legacies of War* (New York: Palgrave 2004), pp. 29-70; F. Sharifi-Yazdi, *Arab-Iranian Rivalry in the Persian Gulf: Territorial Disputes and the Balance of Power in the Middle East* (London: I.B. Tauris 2014).

<sup>76</sup> Reuters, 29 June 2011.

<sup>77</sup> Schofield (notes 45 and 47).

<sup>78</sup> Schofield (notes 45 and 47).

<sup>79</sup> R. Detalle (ed.) *Tensions in Arabia: the Saudi-Yemeni Fault Line* (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft 2000); R. Schofield, 'The Last Missing Fence in the Desert: the Saudi-Yemeni Boundary', *Geopolitics*, 1/3 (1996), pp.247-299.

<sup>80</sup> F. Al Maghafi, 'More than just a Boundary Dispute: The Regional Geopolitics of Saudi-Yemeni Relations', PhD, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London (in 3 volumes).

<sup>81</sup> Schofield (note 47), p. 214-216; A. Al-Enazy, *Long Road from Taif to Jeddah* (Abu Dhabi: Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research 2005).

<sup>82</sup> D. Rigoulet-Roze, 'La Frontiere Saoudo-Yemenite: Une Conflictualite Renouvelee', *Orient Strategique*, 4, 2016, pp. 47-60.

<sup>83</sup> R. Schofield, 'The crystallisation of a complex territorial dispute: Britain and the Saudi-Abu Dhabi borderland, 1966-71', *Journal of Arabian Studies*, 1/1 (2011), pp. 27-51.

<sup>84</sup> Schofield, ‘Introduction to 1974’ in Schofield (ed.) (note 16), 15, pp. v-xv.

<sup>85</sup> R. Schofield, ‘The international boundary between Yemen and Saudi Arabia’ in Detalle (ed.) (note 79), pp. 15-51.

<sup>86</sup> K. al Mezaini, ‘Post UAE-Oman border disputes: social and economic implications’, *Boundaries and Territory in the Gulf Region*, 2013 Gulf Research Meeting, University of Cambridge, July 2013; M. Valeri, ‘One nation, two countries: physical demarcation and nation-building in a UAE-Oman border town’ (see article in this issue).

<sup>87</sup> Schofield (note 18), p. 140.

<sup>88</sup> Schofield (note 48), p. 34.